

Interview with Roger Schrader and Herbert Weiner

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HERBERT WEINER AND ROGER SCHRADER

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SCHRADER: Interview of Herbert Weiner. We have already collected a considerable amount of background information. I would like to ask Herb now to give some of his recollections about the role of the Labor Attach# function in the embassies that he served in, how that fit with other members of the section, the substantive sections, and other sections of the embassy. You can identify it by embassy if you wish.

WEINER: Well, on my very first assignment in London, we were in no particular section. I was assigned there temporarily on a probationary basis as a probationary Foreign Service Officer, supposedly on a six month stint. The Labor Attach# had a peculiar position in the Embassy or rather a unique position in the Embassy. He was constantly pushed from one place to another, but he had a very strong relationship with the Ambassador because of his network of political connections; that is, connections with the Labor Government (the Attlee Labour Government), the Labour Party's national organization, and with the trade unions which were very, very closely associated with the government (the British Trades Union Congress). That was Sam Berger and he had already in his own time established himself as having unique influence. He was able to maintain his standing because he was the only one with real insights into the Labor Party, the Trades Union

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Congress and the Labor Government. The election of the Labor Government in 1945 had been a surprise. Sam had been the only one in the Embassy who had predicted it. The characteristic of embassies in that period or until that period had been to deal mainly with a handful of people in power, namely the government. In Britain most of the time they had been Tories, i.e. Conservative Governments. Consequently Sam had a position of unique influence, also having been very close to W. Averell Harriman who had been chief of the economic assistance mission to London during World War II, and subsequently with Ambassador Lewis Douglas. Since Sam was outside the orthodox structure that you found in Embassies he was frequently pushed from one office to another and constantly had to rely on his top level associations (with the Ambassador and others) to maintain his unique position. To a degree that filtered down to me as an assistant, but we were largely let alone because a lot of people in the embassy in the Political and in the Economic Sections were not sure what we were doing or why we were doing it or, for that matter, how to deal with these new post-war problems that were arising. These were major issues of incomes policy, of the relationship of the trade unions to the Labor Government, of the attitudes of the trade unions towards our efforts to get the Marshall Plan underway in Britain. All this was new and largely untouched by what had been the usual orthodox government-to-government diplomatic relationships. It was new territory. Also, the Cold War was young. Other people in the Embassy did not know much about Socialists or Communists and really did not know where to start. They were accustomed to dealing with orthodox political parties, the establishment political parties in Britain being the Liberals and Conservatives; but there wasn't anybody in the Embassy who knew very much about the Labor Party or its ideological outlook.

SCHRADER: O.K., Herb, now that you have given us some indication of what was the role and the function in your earliest experience, how would you compare or contrast that with your assignments in later years as the labor function became a more established part of regular Foreign Service operations?

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WEINER: Subsequently as the labor function became more established and better known, it started to run into some bureaucratic problems. In a subsequent assignment in Sydney for example we had no real place for the Labor Attach# in either the Political or the Economic Section. So I still functioned largely on my own, and functioned relatively freely. But as the issues became better known other sections started to get involved. The Commercial Section would start to get involved; the Political Officer would start to get involved in issues; there was this overlapping, and sometimes there was friction over who did what; so the Labor Attach# had to establish a sort of unique relationship with the head of the particular mission if you will. In my case in Sydney it was with the Consul General. In subsequent years over a period of time the Labor Attach# became more and more oriented towards the political section. Sometimes for bureaucratic reasons and other times largely because the issues that were dominant in his field were political, he began to be moved into the Political Section. Some Labor Attach#s saw this as an advantage because this gave them, they thought, more clout because the Political Sections were usually the more powerful sections in the Embassy. At the same time in subsequent years I found this restricting. For example in New Delhi I found that what happened was that as political officers tried to limit the Labor Attach# into specific labor-political issues the Labor Attach#'s function was beginning to get a little bit squeezed. Labor-political issues were not clearly all party political, the more familiar framework to some political counselors. Labor issues frequently crossed all lines - economic, political, as well as technical lines. And so in many situations the labor function really did not fit, or fitted very uneasily, into an orthodox embassy Political Section. In my case in New Delhi the Ambassador really decided the scope and the implications of what the Labor Attach# did - in New Delhi called Labor Counselor - was just too broad for any one section. So the Labor Attach# was moved from the Political Section into the Ambassador's Section and was directly responsible to the DCM (Minister) and to the Ambassador with his own representational budget and his own bureaucratic responsibilities; and his own authority to

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act on somewhat the same level as the Political and Economic Counselor; but that was not generally the case in embassies.

SCHRADER: Now, Herb, you have talked about relations with other elements of the Foreign Service establishment in the embassy. Do you have anything to say about your own experience with other U.S. Government agencies that were a part of the U.S. mission operation in the countries in which you served?

WEINER: Well, in addition to the embassy there were the other agencies which had a labor interest. There was AID (Agency for International Development); there was the USIS (United States Information Service); and there was the CIA Central Intelligence Agency); and there were also often other agencies beyond these when you got into places like India where we had vast assistance programs in the health field, and we got involved with HEW people, where you would get involved with some Treasury people who were concerned with monetary policy and so forth. In the technical assistance field, particularly as I recall it in India, we had very large labor programs. As a result the Labor Attach# or Labor Counselor, as he was known there, in a sense became an advisor to these and other AID programs, generally at the embassy policy level. These would be training programs such as sending people to the United States for training in technical skills, or bringing labor practitioners to India to run all sorts of training programs, say in labor education, labor-management cooperation, disputes settlement, productivity improvement, etc. The Labor Attach# was even involved as an advisor obtaining union-management cooperation in the AID programs for birth control and family planning. That came to be accepted because although you had labor officers in AID technical programs there were often general political and economic implications in AID programs. Since the Labor Counselor was in the Ambassador's office he frequently had the ear of the Minister or the Ambassador on the broader implications of these issues. In the case of USIS, the Labor Counselor nominated people to come to the United States, particularly under the international visitor program as a way of building affinity between the United States and the host country; and also arranged for others traveling under other auspices, e.g. the ILO,

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to visit and establish relationships in the U.S. This would often come down to the question of selecting leading trade union figures, people interested in labor affairs in academia or in the government, as well as employers and managers, to visit the United States to look at American labor practice and get an understanding of American politics and history. In other words, the Labor Counselor was engaged in a multifaceted effort of trying to generally orient his host country labor community into the way the United States looked at the world, the way its democracy functions, the way labor-management relations were conducted, the attitudes of the United States to the host country and so forth. This became very important because it was hoped that people who visited the United States would, over time, become leaders in their communities with personal relationships in the U.S. and thereby develop a sympathetic understanding of the U.S. Yet, there was a rather delicate element the Labor Attach# faced. Because of the nature of the Cold War there was a tendency in other countries, particularly in less developed areas, well, even in Western Europe and in Britain, to see spies all over the place. This was sort of a general attitude. There was a tendency to see conspiracies, and to see the CIA behind everything; in India this included among some the failure of the monsoon. Together with this there was also a tendency to appear even-handed politically by equating the KGB and the CIA and the U.S. and the USSR as simple political competitors, rather than as protagonists of democracy vs. dictatorship.

Because the Labor Attach# was functioning in a non-governmental area and nobody was quite sure what his function was, there was a tendency to think of labor attach#s as spies or CIA agents. Local communist parties would feed or generate these suspicions about labor attach#s as part of a Cold War tactic. In my personal experience, I have never worked with the CIA; never had anything to do with it. I had enough on my plate to take care of what I saw as my own work. From time to time I might have known who the CIA station chief was. But I can honestly say that I never had a real working relationship with one, and we used to be very careful to keep to our own patches to avoid any semblance of working cooperatively, working in tandem, or being a working team of any sort

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WEINER: This is Herbert Weiner questioning Roger Schrader who comes to the labor function at a different point in time, probably about 14 years later. Roger, can you tell us how you got into the labor function, how it was viewed when you got into it and how you viewed it...and what sort of background did you have that you thought would be particularly useful to you?

SCHRADER: I entered the Foreign Service in 1957 as a regular Foreign Service Officer without any particular speciality. After two assignments both of which were in fields that I found not particularly to my liking or interests, one a consular assignment in Frankfurt and an administrative assignment in the Bureau of Near East and South Asian Affairs in the Department, I discovered the labor function through a person then labor advisor in the NEA Bureau, Bruce Millen, who told me about the fact that there was a newly instituted training program that the Department had begun just within the last few years. I applied for this. At that time they were restricting entry to FSO-6's. I was an FSO-7 at the time but with the strong support of my boss then and Bruce Millen and others I was accepted into the program. At that time it was a full year training course and after completion of it with four other junior officers who were in the program I was assigned as an economic officer to the American Consulate in Duesseldorf. There no longer was a labor function at that post. There had been earlier years. It had been eliminated. The fact that the headquarters of the German Labor movement and four or five of the larger unions in Germany were headquartered in the Duesseldorf area, it provided an opportunity with the training I had to engage on the side in some labor reporting and labor contact work which was encouraged by the then Labor Attach# in Bonn who looked with some favor on someone in the Consulate in Duesseldorf who was interested in that and who was willing to do some of the work in the area on his own. So for the time I was in Duesseldorf I managed to get in some labor activity and at the time also Consul General was supportive of this endeavor.

The first labor assignment I had came after Duesseldorf when I was assigned directly from Duesseldorf to Wellington, New Zealand. That was the first time I occupied a constituted

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labor position, although it was quite a new one. I was only the second person in the Embassy who had ever been assigned to that particular function and because it was new there were some teething problems again about where it belonged in the Embassy, how much time devoted, and what the function was to perform. Wellington was a small Embassy with a two person Political Section, which meant one assigned there had to do a number of jobs which were outside both the political and the labor field and to that extent the fact that having been an administrative officer and a Consular officer in the past came into good use at that particular post. The position that I occupied was the second position in the Political Section which was not even designated as a Labor Attach# job, and this caused some consternation in Washington. Eventually with some persuasion from the Labor Advisor in the Bureau of Asian and Pacific Affairs the job title was actually changed to Labor Attach# rather than Second Secretary-Political Officer. The role of the Labor Attach# in the Embassy was something that pretty much had to be carved out since there was only the second time that such a person had been assigned there. There wasn't a clear and distinct track that had already been made for any incumbent coming into the job. In addition the Ambassador at the time was an ex-Army General whose perception of the labor movement was pretty limited, although he had superficial interest in what it was all about since it was in a function assigned to his Embassy; but basically there wasn't a great deal of support, and I found myself being pulled frequently into other activities that were more traditional political kind of reporting assignments. But about half way through the Wellington tour the Ambassadors changed and the General was replaced by a former Under Secretary of Labor, an AFL-CIO official in California, John Henning who then brought a whole new perception to the function of labor in that Embassy. From then on there really was no question as to what role the labor officer or labor attach# was going to perform. During this time of course the Vietnam War was in progress and lines were drawn very sharply on political issues with the hard left and the Communists many of whom were in the labor movement. The industrial labor movement, and many on the fringes of the Labor Party in New Zealand were causing considerable problems for American policy and the Embassy's attempt to implement it. So that in this environment the labor function

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took on a fairly high profile because most or a large number of the contacts I had were the people who were anti-U.S. policies in New Zealand, so that in that kind of situation the role of the Labor Attach# was more easily recognized than perhaps it had been at the earlier period when I had first arrived there.

WEINER: Roger, let me ask you this. New Zealand seems to be a far away place, at least to most Americans, and yet you were carrying on a very high-profile role there. Could you tell us a little bit about the U.S.-New Zealand relationship at the time or if there were relationships and activities by the AFL-CIO, which had a very strong interest in what was going on in the Cold War, and also why the United States would have been particularly interested in New Zealand?

SCHRADER: Well there were a number of reasons, Herb, that New Zealand took on some importance despite its small size and remoteness. There were two main reasons. One, New Zealand under persuasion from the United States Government committed combat troops to Vietnam, a company of infantry and two batteries of artillery along with support units and so forth. It was in our interest to keep this going in Vietnam despite pressures in New Zealand from the left to cancel this out and to bring those forces home. Secondly, New Zealand was used frequently and on a regular basis by the U.S. Navy to provide R and R for sailors on ships that were on duty in Yankee Station in the South China Sea, and they came in and out of ports in New Zealand on a regular basis, often with protests from leftists in both the trade union movement and in the Communist Party, and in the hard left (i.e. ideological) wing of the Labor Party. So those were two things that we were interested in for American foreign policy reasons, that is to keep New Zealand active on the side of the United States and other allies in Vietnam and to thwart attempts by the hard left and the Communists to cancel this particular relationship. Within this context the labor role took on a highly recognizable function in the Embassy and in the New Zealand political community. Shortly after my arrival on a first trip to Auckland to meet trade union and political leaders in that area, I was identified immediately in an issue of "The People's Voice", which was the national Communist newspaper, as a CIA spy and so forth, which

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was my first encounter, but not the last, with this particular aspect of serving as a labor officer in the Foreign Service. The AFL-CIO didn't have many contacts at all with the New Zealand labor movement at the time I went out there. The relationships between the New Zealand Federation of Labor, which was their main national federation, and the AFL-CIO were at a pretty low watermark. The FOL in those days was heavily infiltrated at all levels by hard left and Communist trade union officials, which cooled the relations with 16th street. There was an attempt in each year I was there to get some American trade union official to speak at the annual conference of the Federation of Labor which was only partially successful. On one occasion an official from Okinawa who was associated with the AFL-CIO institute in the Asian area was invited to come and speak to the FOL conference but this was the only time that any American trade unionist was included in the official activities. The existence of John Henning down there, however, did create an embarrassment for the Federation of Labor and its leadership because he was so completely popular in the country at all levels and with all segments and institutions in the country. It was quite apparent that the FOL was not providing him with the sort of recognition and honors that other institutions were, and so a number of officials of the Federation of Labor made an effort on their own and outside the existing hierarchy of the organization to publicly make known their regard for John Henning and to shower him with kudos and awards of their own in their own unions and so forth. During this time there was an effort, at least the beginning of an effort, by the AFL-CIO to include New Zealand in the larger context of some sort of Asian-Pacific operation; and a delegation from the AFL-CIO did appear in New Zealand at John Henning's invitation and spent considerable time there with Henning and with friends in New Zealand and labor officials who were counted as friends of United States - and they made quite an impact during their stay in the country. This was the only official delegation from the AFL-CIO that ever appeared in the country during the four years that I was in New Zealand. This delegation that came to New Zealand in about 1968 and included a couple of union presidents and staff members from the AFL-CIO was the forerunner of what later became the institute of the AFL-CIO in the Asian-Pacific area AAFLI. These people were on a kind of a ground-breaking trip

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to look into the possibilities of the AFL-CIO establishing some kind of an organization out there and New Zealand was one of a number of places they visited at the time.

WEINER: Well, Roger, in your experiences, as a matter of fact in both of our experiences, we have had to deal with other agencies, could you tell us a bit about what your relationships were with other agencies since others became involved in labor programs?

SCHRADER: I think that without question the other agency that I had most dealings with was the U.S. Information Service. The posts that I served in didn't have any AID components. They were all in developed countries. So USIS was the main other agency that I had dealings with and I must say very favorable dealings. I found that they were a very, very useful and helpful organization to deal with in carrying out the manifold responsibilities in the labor function. For example in Wellington the Public Affairs Officer and the U.S. Information Service establishment were very helpful in organizing or implementing the International Visitor Program to include labor participants. In addition they were open to suggestions about how we might utilize American labor specialists coming to New Zealand to better influence and assist some of the peripheral areas that segments of labor movement were interested in, for example, trade union education, which had a long history in New Zealand but at the time I was there had become pretty dormant and to the extent that it existed at all was laced very heavily with left ideological leanings. With the assistance of USIS and the encouragement from a new labor institute at Victoria University in Wellington we were able to get a U.S. labor expert out to spend six or eight weeks in New Zealand to help formulate an effective trade union education policy. This was a kind of relationship that I found very useful in later posts with USIS and I always found that they were very amenable to new ideas and suggestions as how to best enhance the role of the labor officer and assist him in carrying out his responsibilities. In Bonn, for example, I was able to initiate a labor trade union information bulletin which was issued on a regular basis and could only have been done with the assistance of, again, the Public Affairs Officer and the U.S. Information establishment there, because I had to depend on them for the printing and distribution of this particular bulletin, and

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again on moving to London we were able to take that idea and get it accepted by the U.S. Information Service in London and they were very helpful in editing, in printing and in distributing again a news bulletin that we put out on a regular basis. In addition I was able to convince the Public Affairs Officer to integrate into his annual budget and program a NATO trip designed exclusively for labor trade union officials and in some cases Labor Party officials who were closely identified with trade unions. This was a particular venture which they agreed to institute and after its first success continued to incorporate it in the annual USIS budget in all the years that I was in London.

WEINER: Roger, one of the things I noticed was that when I was in Australia one of the issues that had evolved as a result of World War II was the change in attitude in Australia towards Asians and Asian countries, which had taken an extreme form in Australia called the "white Australia policy", where Asians were totally excluded from Australia. Australians tended to see themselves as Europeans simply living in the Pacific area and Australia really being a part of Europe. Even in the Department of State Australia was placed bureaucratically within the European area rather than with Asia. Over time, however, as a result of World War II Australia began to see that it had to get along better with Asian countries in the Pacific area and to come to some sort of a *modus vivendi* rather than trying to shut itself off from the Asian countries. By that I mean not only Japan whom it feared but also Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and so forth. By the time I left Australia, which was in 1953, that issue was just in its embryonic state of change. Had you noticed a similar kind of issue happening in New Zealand and at a later date when your tour in New Zealand took place? What evolution had it undergone?

SCHRADER: There certainly was recognition of this phenomenon during the time I was in New Zealand. I think in honesty, however, it was playing at a later time cycle than it had occurred in Australia. In the mid-60's which was my time in New Zealand from 1965 to 1969, the country still largely considered itself both psychologically and emotionally to be an integral part of the British Isles. In fact even at that late date the population breakdown of New Zealand was virtually identical in numbers of Scots, Welsh, Irish and British as

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existed in the U.K. itself and most of the people continued to consider themselves British subjects. The constant refrain that one heard all the time of "going home" meant going home to Britain even voiced by New Zealanders who may have been of the third or fourth generation out there. This issue was brought to a head, I think, in large part because of Britain's entry into the Common Market and the establishment of a transition period for in effect the cutting out of New Zealand's free entry into Britain of virtually all its basic products. At the time I left, this was just beginning to take hold and New Zealanders were fearful that this would cause some considerable disruptions in their economic and social life out there. As a result they somewhat quickly began to look at Asia as an area which they needed to find accommodation with what they had not felt was not necessary in the past. It reached the point, for example, that a large promotion campaign was undertaken by the New Zealand Government to teach the Japanese to eat lamb, a product which New Zealand had in plentiful quantities but for which the Japanese market had never been a significant part of New Zealand's exports. This kind of interest in Asia came quite a bit later than it did in Australia; but it had all of the same kinds of consequences and the same motivations for it, namely that the New Zealanders saw that their economic future was going to have to lie elsewhere other than with the U.K.

Another aspect of this turning away from Britain and looking to Asia also had a certain amount of play out with regard for the United States. Ever since the Second World War there had been an ambivalent feeling among New Zealanders about where they owed their destiny. Historically, it had been Britain but at the time of the Second World War with the entire New Zealand Army away from home fighting with the British in North Africa they were totally defenseless against encroachments of the Japanese until American Marines were sent to take up the defense of New Zealand and remained for the rest of the war. This changed the attitude of many New Zealanders about where their future allegiance should lie. As Britain approached membership into the Common Market this looking towards the United States that had emanated from the Second World War became even greater in many respects because a number of New Zealanders felt that they were being

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betrayed by Britain. I suspect that some of these same kinds of sentiments must have existed also in Australia, didn't they Herb?

WEINER: Well, there was this fear in Australia after the war, specifically fear of the Japanese, and Australians had become very conscious that the British navy was no longer a power sufficient to protect them from incursions from Asia. Also there was a development of a feeling among Australians of seeing themselves as sort of a United States in the Pacific. What was interesting about it is that the core of the support for this was from, you might say, the historic Irish immigration into Australia which had carried with it a certain anti-British feeling. Australia after all is about the size of the United States and there was a certain admiration for the United States and a feeling of dependence. The Battle of the Coral Sea is still celebrated in Australia. Also Australia was looking for investment from the United States and there had become over a period of time a significant amount of immigration of Americans to Australia. At the same time there remained a very strong element in Australia which persisted, as in New Zealand as you mentioned earlier, in seeing any overt actions of friendship or particular warmth towards the United States as a sort of act of disloyalty towards the Commonwealth; and very important political figures would continue, even if they had never been to Britain in their lives, to refer to Britain as "going home" whenever they traveled abroad. This used to confuse American Congressmen and Senators who would ask "Did you come from Britain?" "Oh, no, but we are going home to Britain."

SCHRADER: This is Roger Schrader continuing. I would just like to mention, Herb, one particular experience that I had in my career as a labor officer and that was at the Embassy in Bonn from 1977 to 1980. It was my experience during that time as Labor Attach# and subsequently as Labor Counselor that the interest of the Embassy from the Ambassador on down was at best a kind of peripheral recognition that it was something that was there and someone ought to pay some kind of attention to it. My earliest recollection of arriving at the Embassy in Bonn and my first meeting with the Political Counselor was his telling me, "I really don't care what you do in the labor field."

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Just make sure that George Meany never calls up the Ambassador and complains about something. Other than that you can do whatever you want and whatever you think you should be doing." This to me was kind of an unusual beginning, but I think in retrospect it summed up the fact that substantively the Embassy's focus was on other issues in which they saw labor playing at best a marginal role. For example the two biggest issues that the Embassy considered significant in terms of American foreign policy interests were: number one, the installation of Pershing Two rockets into the front line states and, two, offset agreements with the Government of the Federal Republic on charges for troop costs of the American army there. And beyond these two major issues everything else was pretty marginal and subsidiary. It did not mean that there was not a recognition that these issues were intertwined also with the attitudes of the opposition party, the Social Democrats, at that time, but there was little recognition that this had a play to any great degree in the trade unions. This was in contrast incidentally to the experience that I had in Britain (and I am sure Herb has some comments along this line too), that moving there in 1980 - there the issue of cruise missiles and Pershing Two's was becoming an even greater issue than it had been in Bonn in earlier years. The attitude of the trade unions was considered very important to the Embassy in London, I suppose in large part because the trade unions were such an integral part of the Labor Party as opposed to the situation in the Federal Republic where although the majority of trade unions officials were staunch supporters of the Social Democratic Party there was no constitutional tie in between the two groups. On the contrary the German constitution stated that the trade unions were a neutral force as far as partisan politics were concerned. But in Britain it was quite different, and it was quite openly understood that important trade unions were partisans of the Labor Party, and in this particular issue with regard to the placement of cruise missiles and Pershing Two's on the continent labor political opposition was very strong, and many trade unions were taking leading roles in opposition to this policy which the Conservative Government of Margaret Thatcher was strongly supporting. So in this context the element of trade unions was an issue of major importance; and for the Embassy, it was recognized as being quite important.

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WEINER: Roger, there were a couple of incidents which were extremely important, I think crucial, in which I was involved. One was our relationship with India while I was Labor Counselor in India in the early 70's. This was when the Nixon Administration implemented the U.S. opening to the People's Republic of China and the period when the Indians, and Mrs. Gandhi in particular, who took it very personally, resented the American "tilt" toward Pakistan. Traditionally and historically the Indian role and the impact on its non-alignment policy had been related to its relationships to China and the Soviet Union. India saw itself as getting on with the Soviet Union as a counterpoise to its relationship with China. When Secretary Kissinger had developed with President Nixon the opening to China and preparations were underway for President Nixon and Kissinger to go to China and when they stopped off in Pakistan, India's bete noire, in the process as far as the Indians were concerned good relationships with the United States were practically at an end. AID programs began getting closed down, not on an American initiative, but rather by Mrs. Gandhi herself. As a matter of fact we kept the AID mission almost intact for almost a year after the Indo-Pak War of 1971. The Indian Government sharply began to cut back acceptance of U.S. aid or cooperative working relationships with U.S. officials. The interesting thing about this was that at that time the AFL-CIO took a position, which while not absolving Mrs. Gandhi for what her attitudes were toward the United States and the Soviet Union, was one that the Indians and Mrs. Gandhi saw as being somewhat understanding of India's bitter reaction to U.S.-Pakistan cooperation in the "opening to China". In the end as a result of this the only really effective link between the United States and India was at the trade union level. For example grants for other than trade unionists were not accepted by the Indian Government. The Indian authorities made it difficult for these people to get the exit permits to leave the country, but Indian officials used to say that, well, at least the American trade unionists understand them. So the labor link became one of the more essential links, and the only channel for expressing American views on issues in India. This was essentially done through the Indian National Trade Union Congress and the AFL-CIO.

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Subsequently during my tour in London, which preceded Roger Schrader's, a different issue came up which persisted for a long time. As Roger has pointed out there was considerable left wing agitation in the British labor movement over cruise missiles and particularly nuclear testing and the CND (the Committee for Nuclear Disarmament) was quite active and quite vocal. This went hand in hand with a general decline in the influence of the Labour Party at the time. The Labour Party lost an election very badly in November 1979 after a long period in power, and there was a general feeling in the electorate that ran against the trade unions for a whole host of reasons. Mainly this popular feeling crystallized around the issue that trade union power had become excessive, and Mrs. Thatcher developed it effectively as a political issue in her election campaign. This raised a much larger issue that persisted for almost a dozen years afterwards, which actually involved the leadership of Neil Kinnock as leader of the Labor Party, who had been a unilateral nuclear disarmer. Feelings began to develop in the U.S., particularly those with a policy interest in the subject, that possibly the special relationship between Britain and the United States would be weakened significantly if a Labor Government were elected. This was a new development that had never existed before in my experience since World War II. Britain and the United States had been seen in both countries as the closest allies; and, now in the 1980's for the first time, one could say that there were feelings of serious concern in the United States, even among people even who were considered visceral friends of British labor, and had had long held feelings toward the British labor movement, over what would happen to the relationship with the United States under a Labour Government. This has been to a large extent since alleviated with the movement of the Labour Party and the trade union movement closer to the political center. But throughout this period from my arrival in August 1977 until I left on October 26, 1980, the general focus of the Labor Attach# was the question of where Britain would stand if there were a Labour Government and where it would stand on the issue of unilateral nuclear disarmament.

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Although the AFL-CIO (and its predecessor AFL) and the British Trade Union Congress have had formal fraternal relations since 1895, there were serious strains between the two since World War II over East-West relations and labor contact. The AFL-CIO eschewed any dealings with Communist controlled labor fronts, while British unions leaned toward “contact” for a variety of reasons. However, by 1979 after some delicate minuets on both sides the TUC sent a high level economic delegation to the AFL-CIO breaking the ice. The idea was to discuss important economic issues which faced both of them and resume a useful dialogue between the world's two largest free trade union centers, while avoiding the strains generated by the politics of how to deal with the “Cold War” in the international labor arena.

SCHRADER: The development of this particular issue had a spin-off in terms of the relationship between the British trade union movement and the AFL-CIO in the United States. During this period many of the leaders and significant elements in the British trade union movement were adamantly opposed not only to the foreign policy and defense policy of the Thatcher Government, but of the United States and of the NATO countries. The AFL-CIO was seen by many of these elements as a strong and staunch supporter of these issues and that perception was which was real caused a considerable freeze in the relationships between the two organizations. During the time that I was there in the early years this began to thaw with the exchange of delegations which was instituted by the AFL-CIO and the TUC at the level of the respective economic committees of the two organizations. This was done principally because both sides, that was elements of both sides who wanted to continue the relationship and rebuild it realized that there were so many frictions on the political issues that there really would be no incentive for discussions to take place at that level simply because there would be so much disagreement on the basic issues. The wiser heads on both sides decided that the better choice would be to get together on economic issues and to discuss these. This was continued during the first year that I was in London with some success. The existence of an American trade union fraternal delegate at the annual TUC Conference persisted during this whole period. It

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was not shut off at least during my time there. However, there were some pretty uneasy situations where the AFL-CIO representative was confronted with either large blocks of delegates walking out of the conference hall or lack of applause and in some case boos about things that this person would say, so the relationship was a very uneasy one during these years caused in large part by the hard left's view or antagonism towards the views of the AFL-CIO on foreign policy and defense issues, with which both the United States Government and the British Government under Thatcher were in pretty solid agreement.

WEINER: This concludes the recollections of Roger Schrader and Herbert Weiner on the origins of the Labor Attach# Program, the significance it played in our diplomatic activities at posts where we were assigned and some of the major issues with which we were confronted of greater or lesser significance. We may add to this in the future but at this point we have run out of talk.

WEINER: Today is June 18, 1991. This is the second of two tapes done by Roger Schrader and Herbert Weiner. The first tape, which was transcribed, was done in 1987 and was given to Mr. Charles Stuart Kennedy as part of the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program.

Addendum by Herbert Weiner

WEINER: This is Herbert Weiner, May 18, 1992. The following is an account of a conversation I had today with Daniel L. Horowitz, who is considered the first labor attach# in the Foreign Service, although in a sense because of bureaucratic technicalities John Fishburn at about the same time took on the functions of a labor attach# although he was not specifically designated as one. Dan Horowitz explained as remembered it the source of the introduction of the labor attach# program. As he recounted it, the idea was born of Isador Lubin, who was a White House advisor on labor affairs to President Roosevelt, and Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. Both of them saw the point, saw the importance of knowing more about the pressures on foreign policy of working people. As he explained it, it was clear

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that after World War Two it would no longer be the case where the feelings and attitudes of the mass of the working population would not be significant in the national attitudes of the various governments. Consequently they spawned the idea with the State Department that as a matter of foreign policy interest the United States ought to know more about what the working people in the various countries with whom it has diplomatic relations are thinking and what they are likely to do with respect to how their actions would affect foreign affairs.

Isador Lubin, who had been at Harvard, recruited Otis D. Mulliken, a young Ph.D. from Harvard, who had been working at the Department of Agriculture, to come into the State Department in order to start looking into the prospect for establishing a corps of officers who would be assigned to various posts and who would report on what was going on supposedly among the working people of particular countries. It wasn't clear what these officers were supposed to do or what policies they would be promoting. In effect their first function would be rather to find out how significant was the influence of these working people and whether this whole project as really feasible as an exercise in diplomacy.

Dan Horowitz was recruited by Otis Mulliken and after some consideration as to whether he should go to Mexico or Chile, it was decided that Dan would go to Chile. In the recruitment process Otis Mulliken had worked up a questionnaire which was then circularized some months afterwards to various embassies as well as outside to see what sort of people were available for recruitment. John Fishburn, according to Dan, was an economic officer, I believe in Buenos Aires, and asked for permission to write to Mulliken to ask about doing this kind of work and subsequently began to report on labor affairs although he was not specifically designated a labor attach#. Over time beginning in 1943 when Dan went to Chile, Mulliken recruited approximately 20 people, all from outside, none from the Foreign Service. The reason for that was that it was believed that there were not likely to find people in the Foreign Service at that time who would likely be qualified or interested. It was in connection with this that Dan told me that I was the first Foreign Service Officer, that is career officer, to be recruited into the labor attach# system

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which was in October or November of my first assignment of 1947, my having entered the service after taking the careers officers' examination and being appointed in September 1947. I was assigned to London in December of 1947 to become the Assistant to the then Labor Attach# in London Sam Burger.

According to Dan, in these early stages the Department of Labor was not particularly interested or greatly involved and this was almost entirely a State Department operation and even there it was largely because of the highly active and imaginative role that Mulliken played that the project actually got under way, although some officials in the Labor Department thought it might be interesting to get some labor data from foreign countries.

End of interview